



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

April 24, 2020

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Michael Conaway
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
1305 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Peterson and Ranking Member Conaway,

I am extremely concerned with the state of America's cattle ranchers. Live cattle prices are at 10-year lows and have dropped 30% this year. This comes on the heels of the disruption caused by last summer's Holcomb fire and may not represent the full impact of COVID-19 disruption. While I appreciated the announcement by Secretary Perdue in early April that USDA was investigating market practices, I urge the House Committee on Agriculture to hold hearings on the state of the beef industry as soon as possible.

Beyond concerns about the current increasing spread between live cattle and retail beef prices, the Committee must reauthorize the Livestock Mandatory Price Reporting (MPR) Act before September 30, 2020. This represents an opportunity to improve transparency in the market. I have heard from many Montana ranchers that the current price reporting mechanisms are inadequate and need to provide more detail on the origin of livestock as well as further clarity on any premiums paid. Some are also suggesting an increase in volume that must be purchased through the negotiated market.

I do not have all the answers to the problems in the beef industry, but I believe Montana's producers need to be part of finding those answers. As the Committee works through issues in the beef marketplace and the upcoming reauthorization of the Livestock MPR, I urge you to include the membership of the Montana Stockgrowers Association, the Montana Cattlemen's and Cattlewomen's Associations, the Montana Farm Bureau Federation, the Montana Agri-Women and the Montana Farmer's Union. These organizations and their members can provide important first-hand information on pricing and practices that may be useful to your investigations.

I look forward to working with you and America's beef producers to support America. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Greg Gianforte
Member of Congress